

adaptation, providing better security and maternal care to growing subadults and juveniles. Such a dichotomy in male-female burrow dwelling pattern is quite interesting. In spite of several reports of colonial existence of subterranean rodents, this type of burrow dimorphism with regard to occupancy has not been projected. Since Indian rodents like the short tailed mole rat *Nesokia indica* and gerbil *Tatera indica* Hardwicke also exhibit a kind of colonial existence (Barnett and Prakash 1982), a dimorphism in male and female burrow occupancy among South Indian gerbils is characteristic. It was also noticed that in the majority of the burrows containing young ones, the only adult present was the female (may be their mother). Probably, males avoided such burrows, or were chased away by the females after mating. In several microtine rodents, adult females move away from the colony and seek separate

existence prior to parturition, providing ecological space for their offspring (Lidicker 1975). In any case, the male *T. indica cuvieri* staying away from young ones subscribes to their negligible role in parental care. Such sex-wise separate existence can also indicate the absence of a long term monogamous relationship. In such a set up, the females of *T. indica cuvieri* face the possibility of mating with different males (multiple male matings), as in the case of Mongolian gerbils, *Meriones unguiculatus* (Agren *et al.* 1989), probably to avoid inbreeding.

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### 10. NEW RECORDS OF THE MALABAR SPINY DORMOUSE (*PLATACANTHOMYS LASIURUS* BLYTH) IN THE INDIRA GANDHI WILDLIFE SANCTUARY, TAMIL NADU

In March 1994, we were conducting night transects in the wet evergreen forests in the Indira Gandhi Wildlife Sanctuary for surveying nocturnal arboreal mammals. On 4th March we were on a night transect along a foot path in the Varagaliar shola, 25 km south of Top Slip at an altitude of 650 m. After spotting and observing a couple of flying squirrels we were on our way back to the camp, when we spotted a Malabar Spiny Dormouse (*Platacanthomys lasiurus*) that had just fallen from a tree right in front of us.

During the last one year of live trapping of terrestrial rodents in rainforests in the Indira Gandhi Wildlife Sanctuary and in some private forests in the area, I trapped a few more individuals of the Malabar Spiny Dormouse. Some were in the Akkamalai hills at an elevation of 1280 m, far above the range of 600-900 m suggested by Ellerman (1961). Shankar (1996) recorded the Spiny Dormouse at an even higher altitude (2000 m) in the Upper Bhavani hills of the Nilgiris. Some other recent reports of the species have been within or close to the altitudinal

range. Jayson and Christopher (1995) reported the species from Peppara Wildlife Sanctuary at an altitude of 600 m, Rajagopalan (1968) reported the species at lower altitudes, and Divya Mudappa (pers. comm.) from Kalakkad and Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve at an altitude of 1100 m.

These reports show that the species occurs over a wider altitudinal range than was previously thought. Rajagopalan (1968) reported the species to be a pest

in arecanut plantations. However, we have been able to trap the species only from relatively undisturbed rainforests, suggesting that this endemic species might be sensitive to habitat disturbance.

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## 11. INDIAN ONE-HORNED RHINOCEROS *RHINOCEROS UNICORNIS* LINNAEUS 1758, IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH

(With one map)

Arunachal Pradesh is by and large not an ideal rhino habitat but stray animals have often been sighted in different areas, especially at the edge of the hills, near Assam border. Stray rhinos used to occur in the upper Dihing Valley (part of present Namdapha National Park) in Changlang district and in southern Tirap (Gee, 1964: WILDLIFE OF INDIA). However, specific identification of those stray animals could not be ascertained and there is a possibility of those animals being Sumatran rhino *Dicerorhinus sumatrensis*.

I report here the occurrence of the Indian one-horned rhinoceros *Rhinoceros unicornis* Linn. in Arunachal Pradesh in recent years, observed during field surveys in different parts of the state, which are listed below chronologically:

1978. A female rhino with a calf was sighted in Sonai-Rupai Sanctuary of Assam (not a notified protected area) by the Forest staff (T. Nath, pers. comm.). The location was not far from the border of West Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh.

1986. A female with a grown-up calf sighted in Dulung Reserve Forest (RF) of Lakhimpur district of Assam. The location was near Assam-Arunachal Pradesh interstate border.

1987. A rhino suddenly appeared in Panir RF of Lower Subansiri district (now Papum Pare district). It first came to Kakoi RF of Assam then followed the Joihing river up to Arunachal Pradesh.

April-May, 1990. A lone rhino stayed for more than a month in Pakhui Wildlife Sanctuary of East Kameng district. It came via Nameri Wildlife Sanctuary of Assam.

September, 1990. Two rhinos strayed out of Kaziranga National Park and travelled through Sonitpur district to Papum RF of East Kameng district. On their way they crossed the Brahmaputra river, some tea estates, villages and forests. Later on they were chased back to Khatonibari Soil Conservation Area in Sonitpur district, on the opposite bank of Kaziranga National Park by the staff of the Assam Forest Department.